



H.R. 2342 – National Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation Act of 2007

FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 2342 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Thomas Allen (D-ME) on May 16, 2007. The House Committee on Natural Resources approved the bill, as amended, by unanimous consent on March 12, 2008. The bill was also referred to the House Committee on Science and Technology, but never considered.

H.R. 2342 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on March 31, 2008.

SUMMARY

National Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System: The bill directs the President to establish a National Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System to gather information on the impact of weather and climate change on U.S. coastal, ocean, and Great Lake environments. This data is intended to be used to support national defense, commerce, energy production, resource management, weather forecasting, scientific research, and public safety and education.

The system will incorporate both federal and nonfederal entities, with the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) as the lead federal agency. NOAA is granted rulemaking authority to administer the system. It must also establish Regional Information Coordination Entities to coordinate State, federal, local, and private operations at the regional level.

Oversight and Coordination: The bill establishes the National Ocean Research Leadership Council to provide broad oversight and coordination of the System's policies, goals, and objectives. It also establishes the Interagency Working Group to implement the Council's plan, provide an annual System budget to Congress, and develop certification standards for non-federal or regional entities. The bill also establishes a System Advisory Committee that meets at least once a year to provide advice on the System and to monitor the need for System expansion, upgrades, and modernization.

Reports to Congress: The bill requires the National Ocean Research Leadership Council to report to Congress within 2 years of the bill's enactment on the status of the System and its objectives. An additional updated report is required 2 years later.

Public Education and Outreach: The bill requires NOAA to implement a public outreach and education program on the impact of global climate change and the effects on the ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes environment.

Funding: The bill authorizes departments and agencies of the Council to share and expend funds, subject to the availability of appropriations, to carry out the provisions of the bill.

BACKGROUND

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, one of every six jobs in the United States is marine-related, and over one-third of the U.S. Gross National Product originates in coastal areas. The United States has a total of 12,383 miles of coastline with major marine ports and terminals located throughout.

The Great Lakes collectively comprise the largest system of fresh surface water on earth, containing roughly 18 percent of the world's supply. The Great Lakes provide water for consumption, transportation,



LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

HOUSE REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE | CHAIRMAN ADAM PUTNAM

1420 LONGWORTH HOB, WASHINGTON, DC 20515

www.GOP.gov

PHONE 202.225.5107

FAX 202.226.0154

power, recreation, and many other uses. Commercial and sport fisheries are major industries in the Great Lakes region. About 65 million pounds of fish per year are harvested from the lakes, contributing more than \$1 billion to the Great Lakes economy. Sport fishing is a tourist attraction, and contributes roughly \$4 billion to the Great Lakes economy. In 1959, the St. Lawrence Seaway was completed, allowing ocean vessels to access the Great Lakes for commercial shipping purposes. Today, over 200 million tons of cargo are shipped every year through the Great Lakes, and the three main cargoes are iron ore, coal, and grain.

COST

The Congressional Budget Office has not yet scored this legislation.

STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information contact Justin Hanson at (202) 226-2302.